

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 NEAE-00 /026 W
-----103543 031643Z /53-R
P R 030900Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9927
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S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 NEW DELHI 3418

STADIS////////////////////////////////

E. O. 11652: XGDS
TAGS: MNUC, IN
SUBJECT: INDIA AND THE CTB

REF: STATE 48754

1. THE FOLLOWING ARE THZ ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS
POSED REFTEL IN THE ORDER RAISED.

2. INDIAN ATTITUDES TOWARD THE CTB ARE VERY MUCH
AN OUTGROTH OF THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE NPT. THE
ESSENTIAL OBJECTION OF INDIA TO THE NPT HAS BEEN AND
CONTINUES TO BE THAT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SEPARATE
REGIMES FOR WEAPON AND NON-WEAPON STATES IS DIS-
CRIMINATORY. IN PART THE DISTINCTION IS SEEN BY
INDIANS AS INJURIOUS TO THEIR NATIONAL PRIDE, IN
PART AS MORALLY UNJUSTIFIABLE, BUT IN LARGE
MEASURE AS AN EFFORT BY THE TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED
WEAPON STATES TO PERPETUATE THE SCIENTIFIC-
TECHNOLOGICAL INFERIORITY OF THE LDC'S. MOST
RECENTLY PRIME MINISTER DESAI COMPLAINED OF THE
DISCRIMINATORY CHARACTER OF THE NPT TO A TEAM OF
AMERICAN TELEVISION INTERVIEWERS ON JANUARY 4,
WHICH WAS REPORTED IN THE INDIAN PRESS (NEW DELHI
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0223), AND AT A JANUARY 12 PRESS CONFERENCE (NEW
DELHI 0701). ON THE LATTER OCCASION, HE SAID:
"YOU SEE, WHAT I HAVE SAID WAS THAT SINCE THERE
ARE NATIONS WHO WANT US TO SIGN THIS (I.E., THE
NPT), AS LONG AS THEY HAVE ARESENALS OF ATOMIC
WEAPONS AND THEY GO ON MAKING EXPLOSIONS AND
FORGING NEW WEAPONS AND ARE ADDING TO THEVM, HOW

CAN THEY ASK US, WHO DO NOT WANT TO HAVE ANY ATOMIC WEAPONS UNDER ANY CONDITIONS, AND DO NOT WANT EVEN TO HAVE EXPLOSIONS OF ANY KIND, NOT EVEN PEACEFUL, HOW CAN THEY ASK US TO DO THIS SAYING THAT WE SHOULD SIGN SOMETHING. UNLESS THEY DO IT, HOW IS IT JUSTIFIED? IT IS DISCRIMINATION."

3. DURING THE GANDHI REGIME INDIA'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE CTB REFLECTED THE POLICY IN FAVOR OF THE LEGITIMACY OF PNE'S. DURING THE SPRING 1977 SESSION OF THE CCD, THE INDIAN REPRESENTATIVE, K.P. JAIN, ARGUED THAT THE CTB SHOULD DEAL ONLY WITH NUCLEAR WEAPONS TESTING AND NOT AFFECT PNE'S. HE OBJECTED TO THE USE OF THE TERM "CTB" ARGUING THAT IT SHOULD BE MADE SPECIFIC TO WEAPONS TESTING (77 GENEVA GQITP AND 2179). WITH THE DESAI GOVERNMENT'S UNILATERAL RENUNCIATION OF NUCLEAR TESTING, INDIA'S POSITION AT THE CCD ON THE CTB ISSUE HAS SHIFTED. AT THE FEBRUARY 14, 1978 CCD SESSION THE INDIAN REPRESENTATIVE, C.R. GHAREKHAN, REFERRED TO THE GOI'S NO-TESTING, NO-WEAPONS POLICIES AND DECLARED THAT A CTB TREATY WAS CENTRAL TO THE CESSATION OF THE NUCLEAR ARMS RACE, PARTICULARLY IN ITS QUALITATIVE ASPECT (GENEVA 2653). ACCORDING TO THE AVAILABLE INFORMATION,
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THE INDIAN REPRESENTATIVE MADE NO REFERENCE TO CARVING OUT AN AREA FROM THE CTB FOR PNE'S. ASKED ABOUT THE GOI ATTITUDE TOWARD THE BHREZNEV PROPOSAL THAT A CCTB ON WEAPONS TESTING BE COUPLED WITH A MORATORIUM ON PNE'S FOR AN IDENTICAL PERIOD, THE DIRECTOR FOR DISARMAMENT AT MEA, K.P. JAIN, SAID THIS ACCORDED WITH THE GOI'S VIEWS (DECEMBER 12, 1977 MEMCON SENT INTER ALIA TO NEA/INS AND NEA/RA). JAIN HAS, HOWEVER, BEEN AN ADVOCATE OF PNE'S, AND WE BELIEVE THE PRESENTS GOI WOULD FAVOR A CTB WHICH BANNED ALL TESTS. PM DESAI MADE IT CLEAR THAT A TEST BAN HAD TO COVER "TESTS OF ANY KIND, PEACEFUL OR OTHERWISE" IN LISTING THE CONDITIONS FOR INDIA'S ACCEPTING FULL SCOPE SAFEGUARDS (NEW DELHI 0701).

4. THE GOI TO OUR KNOWLEDGE HAS NOT EVER PUBLICLY OR PRIVATELY UNEQUIVACABLY STATED THAT IT WOULD SIGN A CTB. HOWEVER, AS NOTED ABOVE, THE PRIME MINISTER HAS MADE THE TOTAL CESSATION OF NUCLEAR TESTING, AT LEAST BY THE US AND USSR, ONE OF THE CONDITIONS FOR INDIA'S ACCEPTING FULL SCOPE SAFEGUARDS. WHEN QUESTIONED BY THE PRESS ABOUT THE ABSENCE OF CHINA

AND FRANCE FROM A CTB, THE PM INDICATED HE WAS CONFIDENT
THEY WOULD JOIN (NEW DELHI 0701). FROM THIS WE INFER THAT THE

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 NEW DELHI 3418

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GOI, UNDER MORARJI DESAI, WOULD PROBABLY ALSO SIGN THE
CTB. DESAI WOULD, WE BELIEVE, WANT TO CONTRIBUTE TO
THAT BODY OF WORLD OPINION WHICH WOULD BRING THE
CHINESE AND FRENCH INTO A CTB. HAVING ALREADY UNILATERALLY
DECLARED THAT INDIA WOULD NOT ENGAGE IN FURTHER NUCLEAR
TESTING AND HAVING URGED THE US, USSR AND UK TO AGREE
TO A CTB, IT WOULD NOT BE A SIGNIFICANT LEAP FOR INDIA
TO SIGN A NON-DISCRIMINATORY CTB. AN AGREEMENT WHICH
TREATED WEAPON AND NON-WEAPON STATES ALIKE WOULD NOT
HAVE THE CRITICAL DEFECT WHICH INDIAN FIND IN THE NPT.
THE REFUSAL OF THE PRC TO JOIN A CTB WOULD BE ARGUED AS
A REASON FOR INDIA'S NOT SIGNING IT, BUT WE BELIEVE
THAT DESAI WOULD SEEK TO HAVE INDIA TAKE A MORAL
POSITION IN FAVOR OF THE BAN. IN AN AUGUST 1977
LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT, DISCUSSING A CTB, THE PM
INDICATED INDIA WOULD "SUPPORT ALL NON-DISCRIMINATORY
MEASURES TOWARDS NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT".

5. WHILE INDIA'S ADHERENCE TO A CTB WHICH BANNED
ALL TESTING IS NOT COMPLETELY ASSURED, IT IS CLEAR
THAT THE GOI WILL NOT SIGN A BAN WHICH ALLOWED FOR
CONTINUED, EVEN LIMITED TESTING BY THE WEAPON STATES.
THIS WOULD, IN INDIAN EYES, BE DISCRIMINATORY, I.E.,
ALLOW THE WEAPON STATES TO MAINTAIN THEIR ADVANTAGE OVER
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NON-WEAPON STATES. THE PRIME MINISTER, IN SPEAKING TO THE PRESS ON JANUARY 12 MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE WAS REFERRING TO A BAN ON ALL TESTS AS A CONDITION OF INDIA'S ACCEPTING FULL SCOPE SAFEGUARDS (NEW DELHI 0701).

6. IN OBJECTING TO THE NPT AS DISCRIMINATORY, PRIME MINISTER DESAI UNDOUBTEDLY REFLECTS THE OPINION OF THE MEMBERS OF HIS GOVERNMENT AS WELL AS INFORMED PUBLIC OPINION HERE. WE BELIEVE THAT IF THE QUESTION OF INDIA'S ADHERENCE TO A GENUINELY COMPREHENSIVE CTB WERE PRESENTED TO THE CABINET, DESAI WOULD PROBABLY BE ABLE TO OBTAIN ITS APPROVAL. BY ARGUING ITS NON-DISCRIMINATORY CHARACTER, DESAI WOULD BE ABLE TO DISTINGUISH THE CTB FROM THE NPT. WE RECOGNIZE THAT THE REFUSAL OF THE PRC TO SIGN A CTB WOULD BE USED BY THE OPPONENTS OF INDIA'S ADHERENCE BUT BELIEVE THAT DESAI WOULD PROBABLY BE ABLE TO OBTAIN CABINET APPROVAL. DESAI'S POSITION ON A CTB WOULD PROBABLY BE UNDERSTOOD BY HIS CABINET COLLEAGUES AS A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE ON WHICH THEY WOULD PROBABLY NOT CHALLENGE HIM. JANATA MP SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY, AN OUTSPOKEN ADVOCATE OF INDIA'S ACQUIRING NUCLEAR WEAPONS, HAS TOLD US THAT THE PM HAS A FREE HAND IN DETERMINING NUCLEAR POLICY.

7. THE INDIAN SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY IS BELIEVED NOT TO BE SYMPATHETIC TO THE PM'S NUCLEAR POLICIES, PARTICULARLY THE UNILATERAL RENUNCIATION OF TESTING. THEY PRESUMABLY BELIEVE THAT THIS DENIES TO INDIA THE POSSIBLE BENEFITS OF PNE'S AND PERPETUATES THE ADVANTAGE OF THE INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES IN THE NUCLEAR FIELD. IN THE EVENT OF AN ACTIVE PUBLIC DEBATE ON INDIA'S ADHERING TO A CTB, THE SCIENTISTS
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WOULD BE ABLE TO RAISE DOUBTS BUT PROBABLY WOULD NOT BE ABLE SUCCESSFULLY TO CHALLENGE THE PM ON THIS ISSUE.

8. SIMILAR RESERVATIONS TO THE PM'S NUCLEAR POLICIES ARE ALSO BELIEVED TO BE HELD BY THE MILITARY. WHILE THERE REPORTEDLY ARE SENIOR OFFICERS WHO PERSONALLY FAVOR INDIA'S HAVING NUCLEAR WEAPONS, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THEY WOULD JOIN IN A PUBLIC DEBATE ON THE ISSUE ON A CTB. THE INDIAN MILITARY HAS BEEN CAREFUL TO RESPECT THE PRINCIPLE OF CIVILIAN CONTROL, AND THEY COULD BE EXPECTED TO TAKE THEIR PUBLIC GUIDANCE

FROM THE GOVERNMENT ON THIS ISSUE.

9. PUBLIC OPINION ON THE GOI'S NUCLEAR POLICIES, AS REFLECTED IN PRESS COMMENTARY, HAS GENERALLY SUPPORTED THE PM'S CRITICISM OF THE DISCRIMINATORY CHARACTER OF THE NPT. HIS STATEMENT THAT THE PRC AND FRANCE WOULD JOIN THE CTB FOLLOWING ADHERENCE BY THE UK, USSR, AND US HAS MET WITH MIXED REACTIONS. THE "STATEMAN" SAID THE WITHOUT FRANCE AND THE PRC A CTB WOULD BE USELESS AND DOUBTED THAT THEY WOULD BE INFLUENCED BY THE US' AND USSR'S DECIDING AGAINST TESTING, WHILE THE "HINDUSTAN TIMES" REJECTED THE ARGUMENT THAT THE CTB HAD TO HAVE FORMAL SANCTION FROM THE PRC AND FRANCE (NEW DELHI 0788). IN GENERAL, THE PUBLIC SEEMS TO HAVE -- AT LEAST TACITLY -- ACCEPTED THE CONDITIONS THE PRIME MINISTER HAS ESTABLISHED FOR INDIA'S ACCEPTING FULL SCOPE SAFEGUARDS, INCLUDING CESSATION OF ALL TESTING. FROM THIS WE COULD INFER A MEASURE OF PUBLIC APPROVAL FOR THE CTB.
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